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Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 208318

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FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION USDEL SECRETARY SEPT 02:

QUOTE S E C R E T STATE 208318 TOSEC 100461

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A)

SUBJECT: SPECIAL SUMMARY NUMBER 14: TELEGRAPHIC SUMMARY

1.PORTUGAL -- TOWARDS MORE VIOLENT CONFRONTATION

PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES TODAY PUT OFF PLANS TO
SWEAR IN EX-PREMIER GONCALVES AS ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF
STAFF IN THE FACE OF MOUNTING OPPOSITION TO THE
APPOINTMENT. CRITICISM OF THE GONCALVES NOMINATION
CONTINUES STRONG, BOTH WITHIN THE MILITARY AND AMONG
MODERATE AND NON-COMMUNIST LEFT WING POLIIICAL ELEMENTS.

ON SEPTEMBER 2 A BROADLY-BASED ARMY BRANCH ASSEMBLY
CONVENED IN TANCOS, 90 MILES NORTH OF LISBON. MODERATES
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WITHIN THE ANTUNES GROUP BELIEVE THAT THIS ASSEMBLY

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COULD ACT TO BREAK THE POWER OF THE SMALLER, COMMUNIST-DOMINATED ASSEMBLY OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT. A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE "NINE' TOLD EMBASSY LISBON,HOWEVER, THAT SHOULD THE TANCOS ASSEMBLY GO AGAINST THEM, I.E. APPROVE THE GONCALVES NOMINATION, THEN THE ANTUNES GROUP WOULD PUT INTO ACTION THEIR PLANS FOR A MILITARY OPERATION BEGINNING IN THE NORTH AND SWEEPING SOUTHWARDS TO LISBON. ANY MILITARY ACTION WOULD LIKELY COMMENCE AFTER CONCLUSION OF AN AFM ASSEMBLY MEETING, NOW SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 5. THE ANTUNES GROUP HOPES THAT THE TANCOS ASSEMBLY WILL BE ABLE TO PERSUADE THE AFM ASSEMBLY TO FULLY OUST GONCALVES, TO RESTRUCTURE ITSELF IN A MODE MORE REFLECTIVE OF GENERAL ARMED FORCES OPINION AND TO EMBARK ON A COURSE THAT WOULD RESULT IN A PLURALISTIC PARTY REPRESENTATION IN THE GOVERNMENT. FOR NOW THE ANTUNES GROUPS STRATEGY APPEARS TO BE ONE OF "LET'S WAIT AND SEE."

EMBASSY LISBON STRESSES THAT ITS SOURCES ON "THE NINE" STRATEGY ARE GOOD AND THAT IT IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE POTENTIALITY FOR SERIOUS VIOLENCE IN PORTUGAL. (SEE ITEM NUM0ER ONE OF INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY).

2. ANGOLA: FRENCH ARMS CHANNELED TO FNLA?

ACCORDING TO LE MONDE OF SEPTEMBER 3, FRENCH ARMS WERE SENT TO THE FNLA VIA KINSHASA, AND A FRENCH ARMAMENTS EXPERT HAS VISITED THE "FIELD OF OPERATIONS." FURTHER, FNLA'S HOLDEN ROBERTO REPORTEDLY MET PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING, AND THE TWO WILL AGAIN CONVERSE DURING MID-SEPTEMBER IN PARIS. EMBASSY PARIS REPORTS THAT ON SEPTEMBER 2 THE QUAI D'ORSAY:

--DENIED THERE WERE ANY "OFFICIAL" SHIPMENTS BY "OFFICIAL" PLANE TO THE FNLA, THEREBY LEAVING OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF A PRIVATE DELIVERY.

--DISMISSED THE LE MONDE REPORT THAT ROBERTO AND GISCARD HAD MET, ALTHOUGH ADMITTING THAT ROBERTO AND UNITA'S SAVIMBI HAD SEEN THE ELYSEE SECRETARY GENERAL, AND AN

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MPLA OFFICIAL HAD LIKEWISE BEEN INVITED TO DO SO.

EMBASSY COMMENT: GIVEN THE LACK OF CONCRETE INFORMATION, WE NONETHELESS FEEL IT LIKELY THAT THE FRENCH HAVE PERMITTED THE SHIPMENT OF ARMS. THEY ARE POSSIBLY MOTIVATED BY A DESIRE TO BOLSTER THEIR POSITION IN ZAIRE BY FULFILLING MOBUTU'S URGENT REQUEST, AND MAY ALSO THINK THAT SUPPORT OF THE FNLA IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS

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OF FRANCE AND OTHER WESTERN POWERS.

3. KUWAIT: OIL PRODUCTION PLUMMETS

EMBASSY KUWAIT HAS LEARNED FROM RELIABLE SOURCES THAT KUWAIT OIL COMPANY PRODUCTION WAS DOWN TO 1.2 TO 1.4 BPD IN AUGUST, DUE LARGELY TO DECREASED DEMAND FOR CRUDE AT THE CURRENT WORLD MARKET PRICE. AN OIL MINISTRY SOURCE HAS SUGGESTED THAT THE MINISTER IS BECOMMING CONCERNED.

EMBASSY COMMENT: ALTHOUGH DEMAND IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE BEFORE WINTER, CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS COULD VERY WELL LEAD THE GOK TO MAKE TWO POLICY DECISIONS:

--NOT TO PRESS FOR OIL PRICE INCREASES AT THE OPEC MINISTERIAL MEETING;

--TO MOVE RAPIDLY TO EXPLOIT OFF-SHORE UNASSOCIATED GAS RESERVES, WITH THE EXPECTATION THAT THEY WOULD BE PRODUCING WITHIN FIVE YEARS.

4. ECUADOR: THE COUP THAT WASN'T

FOLLOWING THE ABORTIVE COUP SEPTEMBER 1 AGAINST ECUADORIAN PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ, THE REBEL LEADER, GENERAL GONZALEZ, AND SOME OF HIS STAFF SOUGHT ASYLUM IN OUR EMBASSY. ASYLUM WAS DENIED, BUT DURING HIS BRIEF VISIT GONZALEZ TOLD AMBASSADOR BREWSTER ABOUT SOME OF THE DETAILS OF THE COUP PLANNING AND EXECUTION. GONZALEZ SAID:

--HE HAD BEEN CONSIDERING STAGING A COUP FOR TWO YEARS, BUT PREPARATIONS BECAME CONCRETE ONLY ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 29.

--HE HAD THE UNANIMOUS BACKING OF CIVIL ELEMENTS, INCLUDING THE CHAUFFEURS ASSOCIATION, WHICH WENT OUT ON STRIKE IN SUPPORT OF THE COUP.

--HE HAD COUNTED ON HAVING 900 TROOPS AND EVEN THEN QUICKLY LOST COMMUNICATIONS WITH HIS TANKS AND SOME OF HIS PARATROOPS.

--GENERAL SOLIS, HIS HIGHEST RANKING ASSOCIATE, WAS DISPATCHED ON THE NIGHT OF THE COUP TO THE QUITO ARTILLERY BATALLION TO SEEK THEIR SUPPORT, BUT WAS INSTEAD TAKEN PRISONER.

EMBASSY COMMENT: ALTHOUGH HARD FOUGHT AT LEAST INITIALLY,

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THE COUP APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN HASTILY CONCEIVED, ILL PLANNED, AND GROSSLY MISTAKEN ABOUT THE SENTIMENT OF KEY SECTORS OF THE ARMED FORCES. DESPITE GONZALEZ'S CLAIMS OF OVERWHELMING POPULAR SUPPORT, IT NEVER MATERIALIZED.

5. ARGENTINA: RUMORS AGAIN OF SICK LEAVE FOR PERON

UNCONFIRMED PRESS REPORTS IN BUENOS AIRES INDICATE THAT MRS. PERON MAY TAKE A 45-DAY VACATION, POSSIBLY IN SPAIN, TO RECUPERATE FROM ILLNESS LEAVING SENATOR LUDEN IN CHARGE DURING HER ABSENCE.

EMBASSY COMMENT: MANY OBSERVERS BELIEVE THIS WOULD BE THE FIRST STEP TO MRS. PERON'S COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE POLITICAL SCENE. LAST WEEK'S MILITARY CRISIS CLEARLY INDICATES HER POWER AND AUTHORITY HAVE BEEN DRASTICALLY REDUCED, MAKING IT ALMOST ACADEMIC WHETHER SHE GOES OR NOT.

6. LAOS: SOVIETS AUGMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

EMBASSY VIENTIANE REPORTS THAT A SIZABLE CONTINGENT OF SOVIET TECHNICIANS, PERHAPS 250, HAS ARRIVED IN LAOS, AND IS IN THE PROCESS OF TAKING OVER A LARGE COMPOUND FORMERLY OWNED BY THE CONTINENTAL AIR SERVICES, A USG CONTRACTOR. ACCORDING TO THE EMBASSY THE EXACT FIGURES

ARE STILL IN SOME DOUBT.

--BY OUR EMBASSY'S ESTIMATE, THERE COULD BE AS MANY AS 900 SOVIETS, INCLUDING DEPENDENTS, IN THE COUNTRY.

--REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO A PGNU FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL, AND LATER DENIED BY THE LAO, PUT THE SOVIET COMPLEMENT AT 1500.

--THE SOVIET CHARGE RECENTLY TOLD SEVERAL DISBELIEVING LISTENERS THAT THE TOTAL OF SOVIET PERSONNEL IS LESS THAN 100, THE HIGHER FIGURES STEMMING FROM A "CHINESE DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN."

7. PHILIPINE BASES: MISUNDERSTANDING TO BE CLARIFIED

RESPONDING TO REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN, PRESIDENT MARCOS YESTERDAY EXPRESSED ASTONISHMENT TO HEAR THAT EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MELCHOR'S AIDE-MEMOIRE TO SECRETARY SCHLESINGER INFERRED INVOKING ARTICLE III OF THE US-PHILIPINE MUTUAL DEFENSE PACT WITH RESPECT TO THE MUSLIM PROBLEMS IN MINDANAO PROVINCE. MARCOS EXPLAINED

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THAT:

--AN OVERT CALL FOR US DEFENSE ASSISTANCE WOULD BE CONTRARY TO THE PHILIPINE DESIRE TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR ABILITY TO HANDLE INTERNAL SECURITY MATTERS; IT WOULD ONLY CAUSE LIBYA TO INCREASE SUPPORT FOR THE MUSLIM REBELS.

--MELCHOR WAS SPECIFICALLY INSTRUCTED NOT TO INVOKE ARTICLE III, ALTHOUGH TECHNICALLY THE ARTICLE COULD BE INVOKED BECAUSE IT MERELY REQUIRED "PERCEPTION" BY ONE OF THE PARTIES OF ARMED ATTACK.

--HE WOULD CONTACT MELCHOR, AND CLARIFY THE MEANING OF THE AIDE-MEMOIRE.

8. ZAIRE: SEVEN CONSPIRATORS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

A ZAIRIAN MILITARY COURT HAS FOUND GUILTY 32 DEFENDENTS
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IN THE TRIAL OF ALLEGED JUNE CONSPIRATORS. SEVEN MILITARY OFFICERS WERE CONDEMNED TO DEATH. IN ANNOUNCING THE SENTENCES, THE OFFICIAL ZAIRIAN NEWS AGENCY MADE NO MENTION OF ANY AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE ABORTED COUP. UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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